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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 09/581,378 | 07/27/2000 | WAYNE CLIFTON AUGUSTUS WRIGHT | 1182-24 | 9784 |

7590 02/10/2003

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EXAMINER

NGUYEN, XUAN LAN T

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3683

DATE MAILED: 02/10/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/581,378

Applicant(s)

WRIGHT ET AL.

Examiner

Lan Nguyen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 November 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 22-37 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 22-37 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☒ The proposed drawing correction filed on 02 April 2002 is: a) ☒ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claim 26 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The limitation in claim 26 has been amended to claim 25 in paper #8. Hence, claim 26 should be cancelled.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 22, 23, 28, 30-32 and 34-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Gavin (USP 5,655,564).

Gavin shows a fitting 130 for providing a substantially fluid-tight seal between an opening in a chamber wall 102 and a pipe 156 passing through said opening, as in the present invention in figures 7-11, said fitting comprising: a tubular sleeve 146 passing through the opening with pipe 156 passing through said sleeve; a flange 140 extending radially from said sleeve, a first surface 138 of the flange being configured to contact the

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chamber wall around substantially the whole circumference of the opening and over substantially the whole first surface of the flange; an energy means ... to heat the first surface of the flange in order to form a substantially fluid tight seal between the wall and the flange, column 6, lines 44-46; wherein said sleeve is extending from both sides of said flange, said flange can be positioned either outside or inside of said wall, see figures 7-11.

Re: claim 23, see column 6, line 23.

Re: claim 28, Gavin shows the sleeve is of a circular cross section and the flange is radial.

Re: claims 30 and 31, Gavin shows sealing member 164 providing a fluid tight connection between the sleeve and the pipe by clamping means 160.

Re: claim 32, Gavin shows a method of forming a seal between an opening in a chamber wall and a pipe passing through said opening, as in the present invention, the method comprising the steps of: applying a fitting to the pipe, said fitting comprising: a tubular sleeve 146 passing through the opening with pipe 156 passing through said sleeve; a flange 140 extending radially from said sleeve, a first surface 138 of the flange being configured to contact the chamber wall around substantially the whole circumference of the opening and over substantially the whole first surface of the flange; an energy means ... to heat the first surface of the flange in order to form a substantially fluid tight seal between the wall and the flange, column 6, lines 44-46; wherein said sleeve is extending from both sides of said flange, said flange can be positioned either outside or inside of said wall, see figures 7-11; applying energy to the energy transfer

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means to cause the wall and the flange to fuse together, see column 6, line 23, applying a sealing member 164 to form a fluid tight connection between the sleeve and the pipe.

Re: claim 34, see column 6, line 23.

Re: claims 35 and 36, see column 6, line 30.

Re: claim 37, see Abstract, lines 1 and 2. Note that Gavin's system is of a subterranean wastewater transport system and would be capable of other subterranean fluid transport system such as fuel tanks.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 24-27, 29 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gavin (USP 5,655,564) in view of Evans.

Re: claims 24-27 and 29, Gavin's fitting as discussed in claim 22 rejection above is silent of an energy transfer means. Evans shows in figure 4 energy transfer means 24, 26, 21 for conducting an electric current; where 21 is the heating wire being embedded in the first surface of flange 16; and 24, 26 are the terminals. Evans further teaches in the Abstract the material for use as a heat activated adhesive to be a thermoplastic material. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have incorporated Evans teaching of the use of a

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thermoplastic material being activated by a current to provide a tight adhesion between the flange and the wall of Gavin's system; since heat activated thermoplastic materials are well known to provide uniform and effective fluid tight sealing means as taught by Evans.

Re: claim 33, Gavin's method as discussed in claim 32 rejection above is silent of an energy transfer means. Evans shows in figure 4 energy transfer means 24, 26, 21 for conducting an electric current; where 21 is the heating wire being embedded in the first surface of flange 16; and 24, 26 are the terminals. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have incorporated Evans teaching of the use of a current to heat up the first surface of the flange in order to activate a thermoplastic material providing a tight adhesion between the flange and the wall of Gavin's system; since using electric current to heat activate a thermoplastic material is a well known method to provide uniform and effective fluid tight sealing means as taught by Evans.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments filed 12/12/02 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues that Gavin's fitting is flexible while the instant invention is rigid. It is true that Gavin's fitting can be bent inward. However, the Examiner maintains that Gavin's fitting is rigid in a sense that it can hold its own shape. Gavin's fitting is not flopping around and needing extra support. The fitting is bendable, but is rigid that it can support its own shape. Hence, the rejection is repeated above.

Conclusion

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lan Nguyen whose telephone number is 703-308-8347.

The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 9 to 5:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jack Lavinder can be reached on 703-308-3421. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-7687 for regular communications and 703-305-7687 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-306-4177.

XLN

XLN
February 7, 2003

RECEIVED
FEBRUARY 10 2003
PRIMARY EXAMINER
